

Book reveals follies of CIA's 20-year wild 'mole' hunt

Paranoid searches reportedly ruined agency careers

By Barbara Novovitch
REUTERS

NEW YORK — The Central Intelligence Agency conducted a 20-year search for moles within its own ranks that bordered on paranoia and paralyzed the spy agency throughout the Cold War era, according to a new book by intelligence expert David Wise.

The CIA found no moles, and Wise said there probably were none. But the careers of more than 120 people were either damaged or destroyed, he wrote.

Each CIA officer who suffered secretly later received compensation from the agency under a so-called "Mole Relief Act."

In "Molehunt: The Secret Search for Traitors That Shattered the CIA," Wise blames the late CIA counterintelligence chief James Angleton for starting the destructive purge in a hunt for a phantom Soviet spy whose name began with the letter K. A defector who had Angleton's ear had told him he believed there was a mole.

According to the book, Angleton forced the resignation in 1963 of Peter Karlov, a World War II hero who was the top suspect in the hunt for the mole. In 1989, Karlov secretly received close to \$500,000 along with a secret medal.

The CIA declined comment about Wise's book. A spokesman

said the agency does not comment on books or movies.

Wise, who has written earlier books about the CIA, compiled "Molehunt" over 10 years through interviews with 200 people, including past and current CIA staff.

Among his contentions:

► Controversial KGB agent Fedora, a trained chemist and scientific attache at the Soviet U.N. mission, also known as Fatsa, worked as a double-agent for the FBI and was fed information by J. Edgar Hoover to advance his KGB career. Fedora, says Wise, was Aleksei Isidorovich Kulak, who was never exposed. He died in Russia of natural causes.

► Adolf Tolkachev, a Soviet defense researcher who was the most important spy for the United States in the 1960s, was turned down three times in his efforts to work for the CIA because of the paranoia about Soviet agents that was a holdover from the Angleton years.

► Angleton believed the KGB had poisoned his bourbon on a trip to Israel and the local station chief believed Angleton was on the verge of a mental breakdown. Then-CIA Chief William Colby, who later fired Angleton, said he would have dismissed him then but he feared he would kill himself.

Wise said in a telephone interview he had found no proof that a mole ever existed. A low-level German agent named Igor Orlov was fingered and investigated, but the



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James Angleton, former CIA counterintelligence chief, is blamed for starting the destructive purge.

FBI never proved that Orlov was a spy.

Further, said Wise, "Because of pervasive suspicions that prevailed at the time, the CIA was paralyzed at the height of the Cold War. They stopped trying to recruit inside the Soviet Union because of the belief that everybody was a double agent."

"This brought the operations of the CIA to a screeching halt when they should have been gathering information on, for example, Soviet missile strength."

All the men accused by the CIA of being moles, he said, "were, as it turned out, all loyal Americans."

Wise said he considers counterintelligence an important responsibility of the CIA, "but they have to act on the basis of clear and compelling evidence... not on whimsy and undocumented rumors."